



Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts

AWARENESS CAMPAIGN FOR CHINESE OPERA

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(39103)

**Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Design Technology)
2015**

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TEH SIU YEN

This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours
(Design Technology)

Faculty of Applied and Creative Arts
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SARAWAK
2015

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Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

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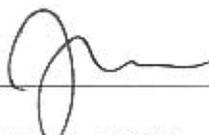


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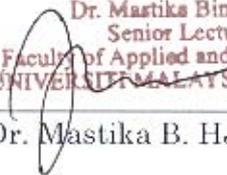
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Special thanks to my friends who always share their view and opinions with me during the process of this study. Their valuable view had helped and taught me a lot in the completion of this study.

Foremost, I would like to express my gratitude to my family who always show their encouragement, caring and love during the period of study. Deeply thanks to them for being with me at all my difficult time.

Finally, I thank those have not be referred above, but have contributed in one way or another to the successful completion of my project.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Chinese Opera is often usually stated by the Malay term wayang, meaning ‘show’ or ‘theatrical performance’. Chinese opera has a history nearly a thousand years and visible in roughly 300 forms around China (Chong, 2003).

Chinese traditional opera is a wide-ranging performing art that include singing, music, dialogue, acrobatics, martial arts and drama. Chinese traditional opera has a long history, as far back as the third century; and during that time these opera were performed as part of court entertainment. Chinese Opera comes in many forms and each is legendary and has its own uniqueness (Your Bridge Between East and West, n.d.).

During Southern Song Dynasty (1271-1368), the Yuan zaju is a landmark of growing the old-style drama and social life was the main activities that very popular at that time. Later during Yuan Dynasty, Yuan zaju was gradually replaced by nanxi, a kind of southern opera. Midway of Ming Dynasty a combination of Yuan zaju and nanxi was known as poetic drama. Tang XiangZu who was known as the Chinese Shakespeare managed to write a romantic drama (Your Bridge Between East and West, n.d.).

During Qing Dynasty, arises a new form of traditional drama known as Beijing opera. In 1970 some troupes of Auhui Opera went to the Imperial Palace in Beijing and performed for the regular citizens. In addition those people have strong urge to learn an artistic techniques and performance from other local operas. Beijing drama not only appeals to Chinese audiences but also accepted by people all over the world after they have united the merits of many local drama (Your Bridge Between East and West, n.d.).

Throughout the cultural expansion of Chinese traditional opera, it has influence various types of local opera and indirectly forms many new forms of Chinese opera troops base on own local dialects and grow rapidly. There's a surveys shows that there are nearly 350 forms of different form of Chinese opera throughout the China. The use of local dialects and unique melodies differentiate the different types of opera. Among the best known forms are Beijing Opera, Henan Opera (Yu Ju), Kunshan Opera (Kunqu), Shaanxi Opera (Qinqiang),

Sichuan Opera (Chuanju), Hubei Opera (Hanju), and Guangzhou Opera (Yueju).
(Your Bridge Between East and West, n.d.)

Beijing Opera known as Peking Opera where noted for colourful faces with artful and heavy facial makeup. Those make up can be categories into four purposes which is indicate personalities, introduce characteristic, tell good and evil and distinguish beauty and ugliness. Kunqu opera has been known for more than 600 years of history and acknowledged as the 'teacher' or 'mother' of hundred opera. Qinqiang originate from Shaanxi province, often considered to be the sixth most popular Chinese opera as it has the oldest and enrich with the characteristic melody system in Chinese opera. Sichuan opera known as Chuanju is one of the greatest arts that known as 'Changing Faces'. The actor will instantly change the face mask from something to another totally different face. This is a talent and a hidden secret that very few people might know. Yueju is performed in Cantonese and in many ways it is quite similar to Beijing Opera but different in that greater use is made of facial make-up and some in weird form to accentuate the characteristic or deliver hidden message. Virtues message such as loyalty, moral, love, patriotism, truthfulness are often reflected by the opera (Your Bridge Between East and West, n.d.).

Generally local Chinese opera can be categories in five troops which are Cantonese opera, Beijing opera, Hainanese opera, Teochew opera, and Hokkien opera which reflect the dialect in every community. During the 19th century, many Chinese immigrants came to South East Asian Island to earn a better living,

during the move they also brought along their cultural rituals and ceremonial festival and one of the cultural is Chinese opera (Chong, 2003).

The oldest style of Chinese opera is Teochew Opera (from Guangzhou) where its history is more than 500 years. Its origin can be traced in the mid-Ming Dynasty (mid-1500s). (Cool, 2009) Generally an opera troupe will be invited to perform at a particular location, one of the stagehands will determine the types of ritual play required to host the temple. Ritual plays known as banxianxi, 'plays that imitate the goddesses, 'big deities', and xiaoxian, 'small deities'. Normally one daxian will be performed during an engagement period while xiaoxian play is usually performed every afternoon. These performances are rituals that immortalize gods and other spiritual beings. Examples of these characters are Guanyin (The Goddess of Mercy) (Soon, 2000).

Several popular Chinese opera stories were drawn from San Kuo Yanyi (The Romance of the Three Kingdoms) and Shuihu Zhuan (The Water Margin) or folk's tales such as Sam Pek Eng Tai and Madam White Snake. (Beng, 2002) The operas are performed at temples and observed by certain religious rites or the birthday of the particular deities. During Chinese New Year and Hungry Ghost Festival, the traditional Chinese opera is performed all over Singapore. Those troupe people will set up tents along the streets and in open fields (Cool, 2009).

The opera stage may be constructed within the temple area or right outside the temple. There are two main sections dominate the stage, the performance area and the backstage. The opera stage design surrounded with the lively costume and colourful make-up which are heavily rich in symbolism (Soon, 2000).

Even though there are several different dialects and various types of Chinese opera and puppet theatre but they shared similar characteristics and functions. They used the same character types which only with different facial features, colour and decorations of the costume (Beng, 2002).

Besides that, rod puppet also performed in the Teochew dialect and also performed in honor of deities which refer to the goodness birthday. On such occasions, it refers as thanksgiving and also for the entertainment of the particular deity. Rod puppets refer to the dolls that about 25cm high manipulated by 3 sticks, each at the wrist and the 3rd at the back of the shoulder (Sooi-Beng, 1981).

1.2 Problem Statement

Chong (2003) mentioned that, some opera practitioners discuss that Chinese opera need to be modernize in order to reach a younger audience. (Chong, 2003) Also, the formal language, symbolism and old-fashioned stories used by the troupes could no longer recognize and appreciate by the younger generation then the Chinese Opera became misplacement and no longer able to carry on. In late 1960s due to poor business, the professional troupes cut down the

performances for temple celebrations or festival to honour the deities (Beng, 2002).

According to Chong (2003), due to the consumption of Western icons, younger audience get influenced by the identity construction such as gradually more accessible cinemas rose in attraction. Idols and icons of Western pop cultural expanded among younger audience and the mastery classical heroes of Chinese opera become the best old-fashioned and irrelevant to the younger audience. The sharp decline in audience figures led to affect the patterns of entertainment consumption.

Moreover (Chong, 2003) also stated that Gwee Bock Huat, former chairman of the Singapore Theatrical (Wayang) Association who perceived that government is trying to eliminate the local dialects which will affect the survival of the local troops. The aroma would have changed if the style becomes Mandarin speaking base Beijing-style troupes. In addition, the chairman also voice out that it's the young people who no longer care and give attention or try to understand the traditional form of entertainment which it will eventually bring down and kill off the wayang (Chong, 2003).

Kui, Wei, Xi, Xin, Zhen, & Pong (2009) raised the issue that challenge the society of transmitting Teochew as Cultural Heritage and transmit in diverse ways both locally and globally by the professional theatre groups and non-profit groups. Teochew opera are performed as a religious ritual. The difficulty of reconstruct

the past, a cultural manifestation and introduced it to the tourist. The concern of the how many traditional operas that performed nowadays. How Teochew opera can be taught, by professional training institutes or taught in house. How media can effectively help to promote Teochew opera. How many new scripts are being written and will modernize life influence the traditional Teochew opera style (Kui, Wei, Xi, Xin, Zhen, & Pong, 2009).

1.3 Research Questions

The very first question will be what is the challenge to sustain the cultural of Chinese Opera in order to reach the younger audience?, this is to identify the problems faced by the youth. Second question will be on how to educate public on the cultural of Chinese Opera so that youth and public aware about Chinese Opera. The second question is addressed to identify alternatives available to expose Chinese Opera to the youth. The last question will be how to create awareness and deliver the message of Chinese Opera to the mass audience. Lastly, the third question is to figure the method available to create awareness and effective message delivery to youth.

1.4 Research Objectives

Towards the end my objective for this research will be to study the cultural of Chinese Opera, to rediscover the essence of this cultural and introduced it to the public. In addition is to identify the difficulty faced by younger generation in order to understand and continue the cultural, which is to find a way so that

younger audience can easily understand the thousand years cultural. The last one is to create awareness on Chinese Opera by organizing a campaign as well as introduced the visual beauty of Chinese Opera to the mass audience so that the uniqueness of this Chinese Opera cultural can continue and appreciate by younger audience and carry it on to the next generation.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is conducted to explore the problem of sustainability of Chinese Opera cultural. This study will focus on Chinese Opera not the dialect of the Chinese Opera as all Chinese Opera share the same characteristic as the only different is only the language or dialect that been used during the performance. This research is basically specifically target on Malaysian youngster which the rage of age is between 18-30 years old. The study will alert on how to retain the Chinese Opera and urge people to preserve the cultural. Al-hagla (2010) mentioned that “Cultural assets are vital aspects for any urban development process. Their importance increases considerably in historical areas, where the richness of cultural heritage has the ability to motivate cultural tourism,” Al-hagla (2010).

1.6 Rationale and Importance of the Study

This study aims to understand and hence create more awareness about the important of preserving the Chinese Opera cultural all over the world. As people are more well-known about the important of preserving the cultural inherited from

generation to generation. Also show the beautiful side the Chinese Opera cultural. Also get to know more on how important in preserving Chinese Opera cultural and the actual meaning of preserving the cultural of Chinese Opera. By knowing the symbolisation of the cultural and something special where it inherited from generation to generation.

By creating the awareness of the important of culture in Malaysia is one of the goal of conducting this research because youngster nowadays do not aware of the importance of culture.

1.7 Limitation

This study only includes the perspective of Malaysian Chinese Opera troop as it cannot cover the reality in mainland China.

1.8 Conclusion

This project will helps to create awareness among public and youngster towards preserving the cultural that inherited from generation to generation. Besides that it helps us to rediscover the essence of the art and recognize the greatness of the past and also help us for better understanding towards the cultural and heritage to further deepen our appreciation towards Chinese opera.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

According to Beng (2002), in the mid nineteenth the Chinese immigrant who known as (sinkeh) who migrated to Malaya in search of economic opportunities also bring in various Chinese cultural and martial arts and were influenced by the China cultural development. Cantonese, Teochew, Hainanese and Hokkien operas, the Hokkien glove puppet and the Teochew rod puppet (kah-lay) are basically bought by the proprietors and the performers never went back. Although those troupes used different dialects, but various types of Chinese opera and puppet theatre shared similar characteristic and functions (Beng, 2002).

Generally local Chinese opera can be categories in five troops which are Cantonese opera, Beijing opera, Hainanese opera, Teochew opera, and Hokkien opera which reflect the dialect in every community. During the 19th century, many

Chinese immigrants came to South East Asian Island to earn a better living, during the move they also brought along their cultural rituals and ceremonial festival and one of the cultural is Chinese Opera (Chong, 2003).

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In addition Cool (2009), mentioned that the operas are performed at temples and observed by certain religious rites or the birthday of the particular deities. During Chinese New Year and Hungry Ghost Festival, the traditional Chinese opera is performed all over Singapore. Those troupe people will stripe tents spring up along the streets and in open fields (Cool, 2009).

The opera stage may be constructed within the temple area or right outside the temple. There are two main sections dominate the stage, the performance area

and the backstage. The opera stage design surrounded with the lively costume and colorful make-up which are heavily rich in symbolism (Soon, 2000).

According to Sooi Beng (1981) many younger generations today cannot understand the intricacies of the Chinese dialect, not familiar with the ancient plots and cannot recognize the tune type. In addition, youngster preferred western entertainment standards based on British and American. As results, audiences for the puppet theater today are mainly drawn from the ranks of children, servant, and members of the older generation who bring the young. Without the public interest or government support and with only few recruits to study arts, it soon will lead the theater to disappear (Sooi Beng, 2009).

Besides that, Chong (2003) mentioned local Chinese opera that performed beside the street was often too poor in quality and also it's very hard to get performance permits and land regulations make the difficulty for street opera to stage regularly unlike their immigrant ancestor, who treats Chinese opera as one of the important element in their identity construction. The author also stated that the street opera groups don't have the ability to attract new audiences. In addition Chong (2003) asserted that different forms of entertainment such as cinemas and television are destroying traditional cultural. Chong (2003) found his study that some opera practitioners argue that Chinese opera somehow need to be modernize in order to reach a younger generation. But the author asserted that modernize will slowly lost the essence of literary classics. So Chong (2003) suggested to woo the younger generation is the connecting of the language divide, provide English

subtitles are increasingly common sight at the operas held in theaters (Chong , 2003).

Cool (2009) stated that it is important to make efforts to continue the Chinese opera with its beguiling sounds, visual beauty and classical stories will be more heavily patronized and appreciate by younger generation although the majority of its audience and fan base are older-generation (Cool, 2009).

The author of the book mentioned that traditional Chinese Opera is highly stylized in arrangement, music, theme and performance. Movement and motions follow age-old patterns, and the physical presence of the actors is rigidly controlled, especially their costumes, social rank, occupation and personality traits of the characters. (Northeast Drama Institute, 1980)

2.2 Awareness Campaign

Richard (2006) mentioned that it is, in general accepted that to raise awareness of a topic or problem is to try to enlighten a community's attitude, behaviors, and acceptance through information to influence these attitudes, behaviors and acceptance positively in the achievement of defined purpose and goal (Richard, 2006).

“A fully aware, well informed and properly trained population is the best guarantee of safety and of successful response to any disaster.” United Nations

Environment Programme (n.d.) It is same goes to how to raise awareness of something good or bad or indifferent is to promote its visibility and credibility within a community or society. Claimed by Richard (2006), to raise awareness is also to inform and educate people about a topic or issue with the intention of influencing them to have positive or negative view on that particular topic or issue. But in contrast Richard (2006) added that providing information and creating awareness about an issue however does not lead to behavioral changes.

According to Sayers (2006) personal communication tends to be the most effective means in raising awareness in small communities but it's not always the most effective compare to mass communication where they rely on mass communication through the mass media such as printed materials, audiovisual resources, website, and media interviews. The author also stated that through one of report published in United Kingdom in year 2006 "the media literacy of adults" said that television remains the most aware and popular media platform for most people. The report also found that mobile telephone technology is fast eclipsing traditional media in key markets such as young people. Young people have embraced and enhanced by the functionality internet world (Sayers, 2006).

Besides that Mohon (2010) stated one of typical use of illustration in promotional can be seen in campaign where the artistic team targeting on a specific illustrative style. Author also mentioned instead of using photographic image, message that convey through illustration might sometimes be more difficult to communicate. Besides that, instead of to look up a list of agencies or a